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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIJING 003172

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FOR UNDERSECRETARY BURNS FROM THE AMBASSADOR

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [MNUC](#) [PARM](#) [PHUM](#) [CH](#) [AF](#) [PK](#) [IR](#)
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SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR UNDERSECRETARY BURNS' TRIP TO CHINA

Classified By: Ambassador Jon M. Huntsman, Jr. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

¶1. (C) Undersecretary Burns, the President's November 15-18 visit to Beijing and Shanghai advanced the conversation with the Chinese on issues of high priority to the United States, particularly global economic recovery, North Korea, Iran and Afghanistan, climate change and proliferation. Your visit will reinforce key points on political and security issues and build on the defining theme the President has set out: America welcomes a strong, prosperous and China playing a greater role in the world, and we want to work with China to face the challenges of the 21st century. We hope that China, in turn, will take advantage of your visit to make concrete its pledges to cooperate with us on Iran, North Korea, Afghanistan/Pakistan, nonproliferation and other political and security issues.

DPRK, Iran, AF/PAK and Nonpro

¶2. (C) The Six-Party Talks represent the best current example of U.S.-China cooperation to resolve a difficult regional security issue. We have consistently urged the Chinese to push Pyongyang harder to give up its nuclear weapons program and return to the negotiating table. The Chinese, in turn, have expressed support for direct U.S.-DPRK bilateral talks as a way to return to the Six-Party Talks process. (Special Representative for North Korea Policy Stephen Bosworth will be in Pyongyang while you are here and will visit Beijing immediately afterward.) While helpful on this issue, the Chinese remain unwilling to discuss with us contingencies in case of a North Korean collapse.

¶3. (C) On Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan, our challenge is to demonstrate to China that our national interests similarly overlap. We agree on the importance of regional stability, effective governance and addressing the rise of extremism. The Chinese share many of our concerns about Iran's nuclear program and have been impressed by our willingness to engage in dialogue with Tehran. We have stressed to the Chinese that Iran is a core national security issue for the United States; our next task is to convince them to take follow-up steps either to implement an IAEA-Iran agreement or apply more pressure on a recalcitrant Tehran. We see this as an important test of China's willingness to stand with us, but so far Beijing remains unconvinced of the urgency of the matter and expresses preference for "dialogue" with Iran while resisting mention of the enforcement aspect of the dual-track P5-plus-1 process. This is despite detailed consultations in October at high levels on the Chinese side with visiting NSC Senior Director for the Central Region Dennis Ross, who framed the situation, and its urgency, in stark terms.

14. (C) Afghanistan and Pakistan may be another area for collaboration, but the PRC faces conflicting objectives. China wishes to ensure radical Islamic states do not emerge in Afghanistan and Pakistan and that neither becomes a terrorist training ground for acts against China. The PRC also hopes, however, to prevent a long-term U.S. troop presence to China's west, and does not want to have to compete with the United States for influence in the region. Until China makes a strategic decision to throw its weight behind Western efforts to improve development and stability in Afghanistan and Pakistan, it will hedge in its interactions with the United States, proceed cautiously on assistance in reconstruction in Afghanistan, and continue to provide its assistance to Pakistan through opaque bilateral channels.

15. (C) We have emphasized to the Chinese that the United States has no desire to establish a long-term military presence in the region and seeks to cooperate with China on Afghanistan and Pakistan to advance our shared interest in stability in South Asia. We have urged the Chinese to increase and to coordinate with us on their economic assistance to Pakistan, particularly in the energy sector, and also to encourage Islamabad to confront its domestic extremists. The PRC has agreed in principle to increase bilateral efforts to improve development and stability in Afghanistan and Pakistan, but has not yet moved from talk to action.

16. (C) U.S. arms control and nonproliferation policies,

BEIJING 00003172 002 OF 002

including the resumption of the START talks, the USG's commitment to the CTBT, and the ultimate goal of a nuclear weapons-free world as outlined in the President's Prague speech have caused the Chinese to reexamine arms control and nonproliferation. We are still working to win President Hu's commitment to attend next year's Nuclear Security Summit, which we hope to use to build new ways to work together on nonproliferation. Improvement in military-to-military ties is another area where cooperation is less productive than we would like and often is derailed as a scapegoat for frictions elsewhere in the relationship, such as arms sales to Taiwan.

Human Rights

17. (C) Recent news in China on the human rights front has not been encouraging, with multiple high-profile arrests and convictions of Chinese dissidents and activists, as well as harassment of civil society groups such as human rights lawyers and house churches. During the President's trip, both sides agreed to hold the next round of our human rights dialogue early in 2010. It would be good if, in your meetings, you could underscore the importance of human rights to the U.S. government and the American people. We want to explore ways to quietly promote the rule of law, respect for the culture and religious beliefs of all citizens, and the rights of individuals to express opinions and ideas. China's increased persecution of human rights and civil society activists, however, makes it difficult for the U.S. to maintain a low-profile stance on this issue.

Chinese Concerns and Areas of Friction

18. (C) Of late, senior Chinese officials have raised China's "core interests" in meetings with Americans, specifically Taiwan, Tibet, Xinjiang, and U.S. military surveillance operations in China's exclusive economic zone. PRC leaders remain critical of statements that the President will meet with the Dalai Lama, and they are concerned about a possible Taiwan arms sale announcement. To date, our responses to Chinese complaints have been firm and consistent: our arms sales to Taiwan are in accordance with our One China Policy

and the Taiwan Relations Act, and are conducive to cross-Strait stability; our support for human rights and human dignity is what defines who we are as Americans; we recognize that Tibet and Xinjiang are parts of the PRC, but the government should address the grievances of the Tibetan and Uighur peoples and engage in dialogue with the representatives of the Dalai Lama; U.S. officials meet with the Dalai Lama in his capacity as an internationally revered spiritual leader; our EEZ operations are conducted in international waters and are permitted under international law. When you are confronted with these issues, we suggest you underscore that, at the 30-year mark of our formal bilateral relationship, it is notable not that we have disagreements, but rather that we can deal with them without jeopardizing bilateral, regional and global peace and prosperity.

HUNTSMAN